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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, "masculine" males and "feminine" females are seen as being the most mentally healthy individuals. Recently this view has been challenged by Sandra Bem and other researchers in the area of sex role identity. Bem (1975) maintains that those individuals whose behavioral and emotional repertoires incorporate aspects of both masculine and feminine behaviors are more likely to display adaptive behaviors across a variety of situations. However, Block (1973) has posited that sex role development proceeds in an invariant sequence through the stages of gender identity and self-enhancement, to stages of conformity to external sex role standards and eventually internalized sex role standards, through stages of sex role differentiation and, finally, androgyny. One's sex role orientation would be one aspect of one's general personality development. If this is so, it should be possible to predict an individual's sex role orientation from his or her general personality development. To test this hypothesis, 21 subjects (15 females and six males) were administered the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and Loevinger's sentence completion test. Subsequently, all subjects were individually administered Kohlberg interviews of moral development. Since there were not enough subjects to allow the use of sample medians in order to assign subjects to sex role orientation, scores on the masculine and feminine scales as the dependent variables were utilized. No significant results were obtained, probably due to the serious problems surrounding the androgyny instrumentation. Preliminary evidence from a related study also brings into question the validity of self-reports obtained with this instrument. It thus appears premature to dismiss a developmental hypothesis of sex role development. With the resolution of instrumentation issues in this area it is hoped that the development of sex role orientation can be more fully studied from a developmental perspective. (Author/CKJ)

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Androgyny and Moral and Ego Development

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Androgyny and Moral and Ego Development

Traditionally the well-adjusted person has been viewed as one who has attained a sex appropriate sex role. "Masculine" males and "feminine" females were seen as being the most mentally healthy individuals. Recently this view has been challenged by Sandra Bem and other researchers in the area of sex role identity. Bem (1975) has maintained that those individuals whose behavioral and emotional repertoires incorporate aspects of both masculine and feminine behaviors (Bem labels this an androgynous sex role orientation) are more likely to display adaptive behaviors across a variety of situations.

In addition to arguing for the desirability of an androgynous sex role orientation, Bem maintains that all behavioral and emotional differences between the sexes are the result of learning, influenced by differing socialization patterns (Bem, 1976). Indeed, she implies that bisexuality is "natural" and that exclusive sexual preference for members of one sex or the other is the result of societal pressure.

However, there have been those who have advocated a different approach to viewing sex role development. Block (1973) has pointed out that sex role development could be usefully examined as a part of ego development, as conceptualized by Loevinger (Loevinger and Wessler, 1970). She has posited the development of sex role through a series of stages, with each stage being an extrapolation from one of Loevinger's stages of ego development. According to this explanation, sex role development would proceed in an invariant sequence

through the stages of: gender identity and self-enhancement (paralleling ego levels I-2 and Delta), to stages of conformity to external sex role standards and eventually internalized sex role standards (paralleling ego levels I-3 and I-4), through stages of sex role differentiation and, finally, androgyny (paralleling ego levels I-5 and I-6).

This development from pre-conformist levels through conformist levels, and finally to a post-conformist level of functioning has also been noted by Kohlberg (1969) in his description of moral development.

It can be seen that viewing an androgynous sex role orientation as the outcome of a developmental sequence provides a very different perspective from that proposed by Bem. A developmental perspective would maintain that individuals must go through a period of sex role stereotypy as a necessary prerequisite to developing an androgynous sex role orientation. Furthermore, one's sex role orientation would be seen as being an aspect of one's general personality development. If this latter point were true, it should be possible to predict an individual's sex role orientation from his or her general personality development. This study was undertaken in order to examine that hypothesis.

Method

In order to test this hypothesis, 21 subjects (15 females and six males) were administered the Bem Sex role Inventory (BSRI) and Loevinger's sentence completion test. Instrument order was varied randomly in order to avoid position effect. Subsequently, all subjects were individually administered Kohlberg interviews

of moral development. The two developmental measures were scored by independent raters. The ego development protocols, scored by a rater trained by Loevinger, categorized subjects with regard to ego level. The moral development interviews, scored by a rater trained by Kohlberg, assigned each subject a level of moral development. Additionally, in accordance with a new scoring procedure developed by Kohlberg, each protocol was assigned a numeric value, which was used in the analysis.

In scoring the BSRI, subjects were not assigned sex role categories based on obtained scores on the masculine and feminine scales of the BSRI. This decision was made because scores obtained on the BSRI were higher than those reported by Bem. In fact, scoring the protocols in accordance with the most recent procedures advocated by Bem (Bem, 1976), and using norms which she obtained with her subjects, would have resulted in virtually all subjects being classified as androgynous. Since there were not enough subjects in our sample to allow the use of sample medians in order to assign subjects to sex role orientation, it was decided to use scores on the masculine and feminine scales as the dependent variables. Since it is necessary to attain high scores on both scales in order to be classified as androgynous, it was hypothesized that those individuals who had obtained the highest scores on the developmental measures would also obtain the high scores on the two BSRI scales.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed, in which scores on the two developmental measures were used to predict scores on the BSRI. In accordance with Bem's original scoring procedure for the BSRI, the difference between scores on the masculine and feminine scales were also calculated and used as an additional dependent variable in the regression equation. For the sake of completeness, an additional regression analysis was performed in which the sex of the subject was also employed as a predictor variable.

Results and Conclusion

The inter-correlation matrix of the variables of interest is presented in Table 1. As can be seen, there is a high correlation

Insert Table 1 About Here

between the ego development and moral development measures (.73). This finding is theoretically consistent and lends some confidence to the reliability of the two measures. The Multiple R, for both partial and full models, was not significant in all cases. Thus, in no case were scores on the independent variables able to significantly predict scores on the dependent variable.

When examining these findings, one can turn to either theoretical or instrumentation considerations in order to explain the failure to obtain significant results. As pointed out by other reports delivered at this symposium (Gaa and Liberman, 1978; Edwards, Gaa and Liberman, 1978) there seem to be serious problems surrounding the androgyny instrumentation. Factor analysis of the BSRI often

yields factors which include items from more than one of the subscales. In addition the median scores obtained on the masculine and feminine scales appear to vary considerably from sample to sample (As pointed out above, for the sample used in this experiment, median scores were higher than those obtained by Bem), making a person's sex role categorization at least partially dependent upon the other individuals with whom he or she is being tested. Furthermore, preliminary evidence from a related study indicates the possibility of a response bias operating in relation to the BSRI, and thereby brings in to question the validity of self-reports obtained with this instrument.

Because of these concerns, it would appear to be premature to dismiss a developmental hypothesis of sex role development. Indeed, the description by Bem of the functioning of an androgynous person and Loevinger's descriptions of individuals functioning at the higher levels of ego development are similar enough to warrant further investigation into this line of inquiry. With the resolution of instrumentation issues in this area it is hoped that the development of sex role orientation can be more fully studied from a developmental perspective.

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Table I
Inter-Correlation Matrix
of Variables

	Sex	Masc	Fem	Diff	Kohl	Loev
Sex	1.00000	-0.39473	0.18287	-0.23585	-0.01429	-0.08758
Masculinity	-0.39473	1.00000	0.01970	-0.28837	0.05935	0.02885
Femininity	0.18287	0.01970	1.00000	0.61968	0.23047	0.29109
Difference	-0.23585	-0.28837	0.61968	1.00000	0.24499	0.39646
Kohlberg	-0.01429	0.05935	0.23047	0.24499	1.00000	0.73150
Loevinger	-0.08758	0.02885	0.29109	0.39646	0.73150	1.00000